

# What employers want vs. what they see in job candidates

Employers look for strong communication skills and honesty/integrity when they evaluate college graduates as potential new hires. Every year for the past five years, employers have placed communications skills at the top of their wish lists. They also prize job candidates who show experience in teamwork, who have interpersonal skills, and who seem motivated and show initiative.

And—they want to hire graduates who have a strong work ethic.

The problem is, employers say, new graduates come up short on many of these skills. Employers say new graduates are not adept at speaking or writing. Many lack maturity. Some are ignorant of business etiquette. And many new graduates have unrealistic expectations of the world of work—and a poor grasp of work ethics.

Employers recommend you turn this information to your advantage by getting involved in classes and activities that will teach you these important skills. They suggest that you:

- Improve your verbal and written communication skills by enrolling in writing and public speaking courses. Take advantage of programs offered in the career center, including mock interviews that will

teach you how to articulate your strengths to any potential employer.

- Develop your interpersonal and teamwork skills. You can gain these skills and have fun at the same time by becoming active in campus events and student organizations.

- Get some work experience while you're in school. A growing number of employers look for internship or co-op experience on resumes.

However, they also recognize that any relevant work experience is important. If you've spent time spent in the business world, you've experienced how to get to work on time, dress for the workplace, and conduct yourself in a business environment. Go to the career center and learn how to tell a potential employer about your experience in the workplace.

- Learn what the workplace is really like. Employers say some students have unrealistic expectations of where they fit in the work force. You probably won't be the CEO of a company within

## Top 10 Places Employers Find New Hires

1. Internship program
2. Co-op program
3. On-campus interviews
4. Employee referrals
5. Career/job fairs
6. Through faculty contacts
7. Internet job postings (own company web site)
8. Job postings to career offices (printed)
9. Student organizations/clubs
10. Internet job postings (campus web site)

your first five years on the job, and you probably won't pull down a six-figure income for a while. You'll need to put in hard work and dedication to the job to climb the corporate ladder.

## Advice from employers:

You'll have to work harder to find a job and you may have to accept a position that isn't your "dream job." Remember experience in your field is a valuable stepping stone in your career. Start your job search now by meeting employers and developing relationships.

Contact your career services office for informa-

## Top Qualities/Skills Employers Seek

1. Communication skills (verbal & written)
2. Honesty/integrity
3. Teamwork skills (works well with others)
4. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
5. Motivation/initiative
6. Strong work ethic
7. Analytical skills
8. Flexibility/adaptability
9. Computer skills
10. Organizational skills
11. Detail oriented
12. Leadership skills
13. Self-confidence
14. Friendly/outgoing personality
15. Tactfulness
16. Well-mannered/polite
17. GPA (3.0 or better)
18. Creativity
19. Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker
20. Sense of humor

tion on seminars and workshops that will prepare you to market your skills and experience to employers. Research potential employers; attend on-campus career fairs; participate in employer information sessions; and register for on-campus interviewing.

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## How To Learn About Careers (A Quick Reference Guide)

If you are thinking about starting a career or finding a new one, you will want to research your options. Here are several ways to learn about occupations that interest you. Identify people working in these careers and talk with them. Research these careers in books and other reference materials that can be found in:

- Job Centers
- Public Libraries
- NH One-Stop Career Centers
- Guidance Offices
- Internet Web Sites
- School and College Libraries

Write to professional associations for more information. Names and addresses can be found in the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and *Complete Guide for Occupational Exploration*.

You can also use labor market information available from the Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau in career exploration and decision making. Keep *Job Notes* handy, and refer to it often.

Visit work sites.

Find a related part-time job or volunteer opportunity.

For each occupation, find the following information:

- a brief description of the occupation and its daily tasks
- career ladder (opportunities for advancement)
- education/training required
- starting salary/salary range/benefits
- tools/materials/machines used
- related occupations
- skills/interests required
- typical working hours
- work environment(s)
- where to get more information

You can start by using The Career Table on page 11 of *Job Notes 2003*.